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ABSTRACT

One of a series of digests on topics related to the marketing of cooperative education, this digest discusses publication basics for cooperative education professionals. Designed to provide the kind of nuts and bolts information to be kept at hand for review before beginning any printing project, the digest discusses: (1) simplicity in the approach and execution of the layout; (2) contrast of size, weight, color, or direction to give impact; (3) structure of elements; (4) eye flow; (5) white space; (6) balance; (7) proportion; (8) unity; (9) how to fit copy to the layout; (10) some typographic "don'ts"; and (11) choosing a printer for the publication (including how to pick a printer, how to work with the printer selected, and some observations about the relationship with the printer). (SR)

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Cooperative Education Marketing

DIGEST SERIES

John W. Mosser, Editor; Terrence A. Taylor, Associate Editor

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Publication Design & Printing Basics For Cooperative Education Professionals

*by Polly Pattison
and the staff of Ragan Communications*

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INTRODUCTION

The printed brochure, poster or newsletter is often the co-op professional's first contact with a student or employer. That first contact sets the stage for all future communication. Often, however, the person with the responsibility for producing the publication has little or no experience with graphic design or printing. This digest is designed to provide the kind of nuts and bolts information that can and should be kept at hand for review before you begin any printing project.

SIMPLICITY

Simplicity in the approach and execution of the layout will communicate the content faster to the reader. This applies whether it be a type arrangement, photo layout, or layout combining both art and type. A simple layout can also be boring, but consider the following as you prepare a layout:

1. Are page numbers and running heads really needed in a brief newsletter?
2. Are subheads within the articles really necessary? (Some studies show they contribute little, editorially, to the reader.)
3. Can two lines in a heading do the job of three; one line the job of two?
4. Can you organize all of your very short items into one column rather than spreading them around?
5. Can you simplify content into fewer articles and items?
6. Do your photographs make simple, uncluttered statements or do they require searching to get the message?
7. Are photo captions simplified to contain only the necessary information?
8. Are all the elements on a page placed so that the reader can move from one article to another without visual detours or obstructions?
9. Are superfluous decorative elements removed from the layout?

CONTRAST

In addition to simplicity, contrast is needed to give impact to a layout: contrast of size, weight, color, or direction. Edit your photos and decide which one can go big. Make it really big. *You* decide what is the important thing for the reader to look at. Nothing big on the page means the editor does not know what he or she wants the reader to notice first.

Contrast sizes of headlines—which is the most important? Make it large and others smaller. Look for the important elements of type or art that bring significance to the layout by making them bigger, bolder, or smaller than the rest.

STRUCTURE

1. All elements should be organized or grouped in easy to grasp arrangements.
2. Find the *Magic Line*. The Magic Line means the principle of alignment carried out as a deliberate design technique throughout a story or layout. It is a predetermined position on a page used as a line from which the visual elements (art or type) are hung. It's an invisible demarcation that gives structure to the page.

There is an art to finding the magic line. You will feel it as dictated by the elements you are working with. There can be several to a layout. The more photos you use, the greater the need for their careful alignment.

3. Regular margins, column widths, and alley widths should be established and adhered to throughout the entire publication.

EYE FLOW

1. Layouts can be attractive to the eye and easily read when the content seems to flow with ease from headline through to the last paragraph of copy. Simplicity of presentation helps to establish good flow. The most important matter should be at top. Things of less importance have smaller headlines and should be lower on the page.

2. Notice the direction of heads in photos. Make sure that directional elements such as eyes, arrows, etc., point into the center of the copy or page, not away from the copy or off the page.

3. Copy areas need to flow without interruption or break. The eye should move easily from headline to blurb, to copy. Trick layouts or contrived type treatments usually result in poor eye flow and can weaken an otherwise forceful layout presentation. A layout that fails in simplicity will most likely be weak in eye flow.

WHITE SPACE

White space is *not* what is left over, it is an active participant in the design. It is a most effective part of page layout, especially photo layouts. If you leave *no* white space as part of your live-matter makeup, that conveys the tight personality of a newspaper style. Open white space leads the eye into and around photos and type. It can give drama to a page, create contrast, help emphasize structure.

Plan photo layouts by starting at the center of a page and working out, leaving white space on the outer perimeters of pages.

BALANCE

Whatever you put down on a page or spread, you should be able to draw a line down the center and have elements on either side that "weigh" the same. Centered balance is boring, so look for informal balance with large photos toward the center of the spread; smaller ones out near the edge, like a teeter totter. Remember, big elements weigh more than small; dark or black elements weigh more than gray elements; color weighs more than black and white.

PROPORTION

This principle holds that unequal space divisions are more interesting than equal divisions. A square, with its equal dimensions, is not quite as interesting as a rectangle. So the typical magazine page is deeper than it is wide. Odd numbers of photos are more interesting than even numbers.

UNITY

Under this principle, every item on the page or spread should appear to be related. Art should be produced by the same person; type should be of one type family (for headlines) with various sizes and weights used for contrast; left and right pages should appear related; structure should unify photos and copy blocks.

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HOW TO FIT COPY TO YOUR LAYOUT

There is no one fixed procedure which applies to all copy-fitting problems. Varied conditions determine the ways by which space and copy are made to fit each other. The two major variations to the problem are: 1) When a typographic layout is designed first, and the copy written to fit the space. (Assumes the amount of copy can be changed to fit layout.) 2) When copy is written first and layout is made to fit the amount of copy. (Assumes the layout can be changed to fit copy.)

In either case a definite mathematical computation must be made before the job is ready for typesetter. This computation, to be accurate, must be based on the following set of related factors: the amount of copy, the style and point size of the typeface, leading between lines of type, dimensions of copy area.

Because words vary in length, the amount of copy must be based on a character count, rather than word count. The term "character" refers to the individual letters which comprise the words, plus the spaces between words, plus all signs, numbers, and punctuation marks. Because a character count is an important factor when copyfitting, let us describe some alternatives; they vary depending on the amount of copyfitting you have to do and the nature of the assignment.

1. If you are using a computer word processing program such as Microsoft Word, copyfitting is greatly simplified, because the program itself will tell you how many characters there are in your copy. Using Microsoft Word as an example, every time the writer "saves" the document, the lower left hand corner of the screen displays the current number of characters.
2. In editorial departments of many newspapers and publishing houses, special typing paper with a vertical guide line printed on the right-hand side is used to prepare copy. Each line of text is typewritten exactly flush to the line, regardless of where the words break. Since all typewritten lines are uniform in length, every line will contain the same number of characters. It is thus a simple matter to compute the total number of characters on the page by multiplying the characters per line by number of lines. Adding the number of typewritten pages will give the total number of characters of the manuscript or text.
3. Another method frequently used involves drawing a vertical line down the right-hand side of the page at a point where most of the typewritten lines end. This establishes the "average" length of a copy line. The characters of any one line which touch the vertical guide are counted. This count is multiplied by the number of lines on the page. To this sum is added or subtracted the number of characters on any line which extends beyond or falls short of the vertical line.
4. Perhaps the most accurate way to compute the number of characters in the copy is by measuring each line with a ruler. A typewritten line has, in most cases, either 10 or 12 characters to an inch. (Elite—12; pica—10) To get the total character count for the copy, add the number of characters for each line. When you have the total number of characters in the copy, you can discover how many lines deep the copy will run. Most type books give a chart indicating how many characters will fit into a given pica width. Determine the width in picas of your column. (Example, 13 picas.) Look up how many characters in the type face you choose will fit in 13 picas. (Example, 35 characters in 13 picas for 9 pt. Helvetica.) Divide 35 into the total number of characters in the copy to find how many lines the copy fills.
5. A final method does not involve counting the total number of characters in the copy. If you know your type face and size, and the column width, you can look at a type chart and learn how many characters will fit into your column width. (Example, 35 characters in 13 picas for 9 pt. Helvetica.) Draw a vertical rule on your copy at the 35th character—another at the 70th. Count the number of 35 character lines in each paragraph; then total for the whole story.

SOME TYPOGRAPHIC DON'TS

1. Don't use large masses of italic copy. It's very hard to read. In small amounts it is fine for contrast and impact.
2. Don't use headlines with all capital letters unless the headlines are very short.
3. Don't capitalize every word of the headline. Capitalize only the first word and proper nouns.
4. Don't have less than three lines at the top of a column before a subhead or a photo.
5. Don't leave widows (one or two words on a line) at the top of column.
6. Don't use large masses of reverse type (white type on black or a color).
7. Avoid carry-overs, especially at the top of page, and especially if your publication is four pages or less.
8. Don't place captions in large blocks with numbers, and then play hide-and-seek with the reader.
9. Avoid running type around in an odd shape, running type around an element makes it harder to read than straight matter and expensive to set. It is also hard to copy fit.
10. Avoid type printed on photos.
11. Avoid type dropped out of photos.
12. Avoid type in color, on color.
13. Avoid lines over 40-45 characters in length.
14. Avoid headlines and text in pale colors.
15. Don't use more than three type styles on one page.
16. Don't indent the first paragraph of copy. Starting type flush with the left margin gives a crisper edge to the start of a story. (Optional)

CHOOSING A PRINTER FOR YOUR PUBLICATION

One of the most important elements in producing a publication is a printer who can provide the quality work you need in the time you need it. The Newsletter Association of America offers these suggestions for choosing and developing a working relationship with a printer along with a glossary of terms used by printers and mailers.

HOW TO PICK A PRINTER:

What type of equipment do they have and how much? To get a better view of what scale of operation you are dealing with and whether they have the capacity to do the work you'll need.

What turnaround time do they offer? Get the printers to tell you when they have to have the work to finish it on your schedule. It's important to learn if they're an integrated shop. Do they offer composition and mailing, or will those services have to be handled by someone else—at a cost of additional time.

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Do they print newsletters now? Ask to see all of them. It will tell you a lot about the type of work they do.

Price. Put this last because it isn't always the most important consideration in view of the other factors above. (Ask for a bid for a full year—if they can count on your job coming in every Wednesday p.m. and build a schedule around it, you'll often get a better price and better service.)

HOW TO WORK WITH THE PRINTER YOU'VE SELECTED:

“Despite the impression you probably have, printing is a high capital, low profit, low return on investment business,” comments Larry Blumenfield of Plymouth Printing, a Washington firm with extensive experience with newsletter publishers. Blumenfield gives the following suggestions on selecting and working with printers:

Decide what you want to accomplish. Different jobs and different printers involve considerations like (1) speed, (2) economy, (3) reliability, and (4) high quality (“something we all like to promise to deliver, although I'm never sure how precisely to define it”).

Then: Discuss this with your printer. They need to know what you want and what is most important to you.

Don't make price THAT significant a consideration. (Obviously Blumenfield's suggestions are most applicable to developing and maintaining an on-going relationship with a single printer—conversely, the publisher can bid out every single job among half-a-dozen printers and always go with the low bid.)

Evaluate management attitude. All printers have pretty much the same equipment and, within a labor market, probably pretty much the same level of skilled personnel. What makes the difference is the willingness of the printer to accept your requirements.

Think long term. At Plymouth Printing, by plan, they conduct business so that they are a profitable account for each of their suppliers. When the occasion arises in which they need special service, they claim they generally get it.

Always give written instructions. If you don't have purchase orders, type out directions clearly—it avoids confusion about who said what to whom.

Learn the printing process. If you don't know anything about the various steps from copy through mailing, you're pretty much at the printer's mercy.

Be realistic about deadlines. If you haven't cried “Wolf!” once too often, your printers will break their necks for you when you really need help.

Talk over your requirements. Some types of paper, for example, can be in short supply. If printers know you're planning a 100,000 brochure mailing, they can shop around and have the necessary paper supplies on hand at job time.

Get a blue-line on big jobs. It protects both sides when, on a large project like a promotion brochure; you check over a blue-line proof before it goes on the press.

If you use graphic designers, make sure they communicate with the printer. This avoids a situation where the designer didn't know that your regular printer can't handle bleeds and so put them on all four sides of the brochure cover.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRINTER:

- Printers are human. When pressed they often promise more than they know they can deliver.
- Almost every printing firm is supported by three to five dominant accounts. If your job gets in the way of that bulldozer, it can be flattened.
- Who put the "lie" in reliable? Probably the printers. Printers have a stable of excuses you wouldn't believe. "The job is on the truck," "It won't dry so we can't fold it," etc., etc., but...
- If you don't get what you expected, look carefully at who failed. "In our experience," says Blumenfeld, "without intending to brag, more customers miss deadlines with us than we do with them."
- One of the things printers do best is follow instructions. One of the things they do worst is attempt to follow inadequate instructions while getting the rush job out on time.

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Polly Pattison is a well known graphic designer who also writes and lectures on topics related design, production and printing.

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A CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The editors of the Cooperative Education Marketing Digest Series invite the submission of manuscripts on topics related to the marketing of cooperative education for the 1991 Digest Series.

Because of the wide interest in cooperative education, successful manuscripts can ultimately reach more than 1,000 scholars and professionals in the field.

Manuscripts in the 1990 Digest Series deal with such topics as:

- market research
- the role of the regional cooperative education training center in marketing
- marketing cooperative education to multi-ethnic students
- direct mail marketing
- public relations
- publication design and printing

The general goal of the Digest Series is to provide cooperative education practitioners with well researched and documented articles containing concrete, "nuts and bolts" information that can be put to work immediately in tackling the challenges and problems involved in marketing cooperative education programs.

Carefully examine the article above for examples of editorial style and content. Each manuscript must be supported by a formal bibliography and citations.

While not every submission will be published, all articles will be given careful and thorough review; authors will receive a prompt response.

SPECIFICATIONS:

1. Manuscripts (including bibliography) should be 10 to 15 typed, double-spaced pages in length (for those using computerized word processing systems, this is approximately 35,000 character strokes).
2. Submissions should include biographical information about the author or authors, and a resume or vita.
3. Do not send the original or only existing copy of photographs or art work, as these cannot be returned.
4. Mail all submissions to:

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